

have a dairy industry in Vermont.”

Gil Livingston, president of the [Vermont Land Trust](#) spoke about conservation's role in making farms more affordable for junior generation farmers. “The second principle function of land conservation in Vermont is to provide affordable [farm] access for new enterprises.”

According to Livingston, one-third of farm conservation easements in VT are placed at the point of land and asset transition between junior and senior generations, which enables younger generation farmers to acquire farms that are otherwise out of reach. These transactions can take place either within the family or outside of it.

Secretary of Agriculture Designee Chuck Ross included mention of new farmers in his message about reasons for hope in Vermont's working landscape. “There's a new agricultural renaissance happening that is fueled by young people entering the field of agriculture across the state. They are educated, their committed, and they're dedicated.”

Ross went on to conclude, “If we are really going to protect what we claim to be valuable, which I believe is a reflection of the soul of who we are as a state, and that is our working landscape—we're going to need to think strategically, we're going to need to be smart, innovative and responsive to the marketplace. But most importantly we are going to need to work together...we're going to need to come together as Vermonters to make some difficult decisions, to find some difficult compromises, to seize the opportunities that are before us, and to promote and support that which we value—our working landscape and the people who work on it.”

VCRD has asked all stakeholders in the working landscape to sign the [Vermont Working Landscape Partnership](#), which will advance an [Action Plan Platform](#) to support local agriculture and forestry, to support farm and forest entrepreneurs, and to conserve Vermont's Working Landscape for the next generation.

The Action Plan, as one might notice, is still broadly focused. To new farmer and forester readers of this blog, what are the specific limitations you face, and what specific steps can the VT Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets, the VT legislature, or other agricultural and forestry support organizations take to improve your ability to manage economically viable enterprises, preserve and improve the natural resources on which they depend, and enliven your communities?

Our door is always open and we are always interested to hear your views.

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